**The Dreikur's Model**

**The Dreikur's Model of Confronting Mistaken Goals**

All students want recognition. Most misbehavior results from their attempts to get it. When frustrated in their attempts to gain the recognition they desire, their behavior turns toward four "mistaken goals". Teachers must recognize and deal effectively with these.

**Dreikur's Key Ideas.**

1. Discipline is not punishment. It is teaching students to impose limits on themselves.
2. Democratic teachers provide firm guidance and leadership. They allow students to have a say in establishing rules and consequences.
3. All students want to "belong". They want status and recognition. Most of their behavior is directed by their desire to belong.
4. Misbehavior reflects the mistaken belief that it will lead to the recognition they want.
5. Misbehavior is associated with four mistaken goals: seeking attention , gaining power , taking revenge , and displaying inadequacy. The goal in each case is to elicit certain responses from teachers.
6. Teachers should quickly identify the mistaken goals and act to avoid their reinforcement.
7. Teachers should encourage student's efforts while avoiding praise of either their work or character.
8. Teachers should teach students that unpleasant consequences always follow inappropriate behavior.

Dreikurs believed that teachers who teach in a mostly democratic fashion are those who most effectively establish discipline. Dreikurs' categorization of teachers is based on the predominant behavior they display in the classroom.

He identifies three types of teachers:

**1. Autocratic.**

Autocratic teachers force their will on students in order to control the class. They motivate students with outside pressures rather than stimulate motivation from within. This attitude and approach tends to perpetuate problem behavior. Authoritarian figures are increasingly being rejected by students. Students seek a democratic atmosphere in which they are treated as equal human beings and react with hostility to the autocratic teacher.

**2. Permissive.**

Permissive teachers generate problem behavior because the atmosphere they allow is not based on everyday reality. Students in a permissive classroom fail to learn that successful living in general society requires them to follow rules. They do not learn that failure to follow rules results in adverse consequences. They do not learn that acceptable behavior requires self-discipline.

Students are confused because they believe that they are free from restraint and can do whatever they want. However they discover that things do not go smoothly for them. Discipline and control must be present in classrooms if learning is to occur. Students want guidance and leadership. They are willing to accept guidance if it is not forced on them and if they believe they are being heard. This does not mean that they want control of the classroom.

**3. Democratic.**

Democratic teachers are neither permissive nor autocratic. They provide firm guidance and leadership by establishing rules and consequences. Freedom grows from discipline. To the extent that students understand that consequences follow behavior, they are then free to choose behavior that will attain their legitimate needs. Discipline involves teaching students how to establish an inner control that permits them to choose behavior compatible with their best interests. Teaching students how to attain self discipline eliminates the need for constant corrective action by the teacher.

It is Dreikurs's assertion that the following 8 conditions foster a democratic classroom:

1.The establishment of order.   
2. The setting of limits.   
3. The use of firmness and kindness:

Firmness from teachers shows that they respect themselves.   
Kindness shows their respect for others.

4. Involving student when establishing and maintaining rules.   
5. Leadership from the teacher.   
6. Inviting cooperation and eliminating destructive competition.   
7. Promoting a sense of belonging within a group.   
8. Encouraging an atmosphere of freedom to explore, discover, and choose acceptable behavior through understanding the responsibilities and consequences associated with it.

Dreikurs' do's and don'ts.  
Effective discipline requires the teacher to provide continuing guidance in helping students develop inner control. Discipline should not consist solely of limits imposed at times of stress and conflict from the outside . It should be built up and continually renewed and refreshed by consistent guidance that promotes a feeling of cooperation and team effort.

To achieve successful discipline Dreikurs suggests:

**Teachers should:**

1. Give clear-cut directions for the actions expected of students. Wait until you have the attention of all class members before giving directions.
2. Establish a relationship with each individual based on trust and mutual respect.
3. Use logical consequences instead of traditional punishment. The consequence must bear a direct relationship to the behavior and must be understood by the students.
4. See each behavior in its proper perspective. In this way, you will avoid making serious issues out of trivial incidents.
5. Let students assume greater responsibility for their own behavior and learning.
6. Treat students as your social equals.
7. Combine kindness and firmness. The student must always sense and respect that while you are a friend, you will not accept certain kinds of behavior.
8. At all times distinguish between the deed and the doer. This allows you to retain respect for the student while not accepting their behaviour.
9. Set limits from the beginning but work toward mutual understanding, a sense of mutual responsibility and mutual consideration for others.
10. Mean what you say, keep your demands simple and ensure that they are carried out.
11. Deal with incidents quickly and effectively, bring them swiftly to closure and work to repair damaged relationships. Let students know that mistakes are corrected, forgiven and then forgotten.

**Teachers should not:**

1. Nag and scold as this is likely to strengthen a student's regrettable concept on how to get attention.
2. Work to obtain a promise from a student. Most students will promise to change in order to free themselves from an uncomfortable situation. Requiring a student to give you a promise is a sheer waste of time.
3. Find fault with students. It may hurt their self-esteem and discourage them.
4. Adopt double standards - we are all familiar with these.
5. Use threats as a method to discipline students. Although some students may become intimidated and conform for the moment, threats have no lasting value. They do not lead to a change in a student's basic attitude.

**Comments on Dreiker's views**

Dreikurs' model has the potential to bring about genuine attitudinal changes in students. If an attitudinal change occurs then behave improves or changes because students consider it the proper thing to do. Dreikurs considers his approach to be democratic as teachers and students together decide on rules and consequences. They take joint responsibility for maintaining a classroom climate that is conducive to learning. For all its strengths, Dreikurs' system does require steady and continual effort for valuable results to become evident. Additionally, a word of warning, there exists in the model a possible defect or lack that causes serious concern to teachers of hard-to-manage classes. We may raise the issue in the form of a question: "What do you do when students defy you?"

Experienced teachers know that defiant behavior is often strongly reinforced by other class members and that it is likely to spread. They believe such behavior must be stopped at once. Dreikurs is silent here.

Regardless of this very significant limitation, Dreikurs' emphasis on mutual respect and encouragement of student effort and general responsibility takes its rightful place amongst the most powerful techniques for building desirable human character. In summary, Dreikurs' greatest contribution lies, not in how to suppress undesired behavior in the short term but in how to build in students an inner sense of responsibility and respect for themselves and others.

**Application of the Model**

Nathan will not work

Nathan is quite docile in Mr. Smith's class. He never disrupts the class and has little contact with other students. Regardless of Mr. Smith's best efforts Nathan rarely completes an assignment. Nathan doesn't seem to care. He makes little effort. He is simply there - a mere physical presence in the classroom!

How would Dreikurs deal with Nathan?

1. Identify Nathan's mistaken goal. (Mr. Smith can do this by checking his own reaction to Nathan's lethargy and by noting the reactions of other students when he attempts to correct him.)
2. If Nathan's mistaken goal is attention seeking, ignore him.
3. If Nathan's mistaken goal is gaining power, admit that Nathan has power: "I can't make you do your work. What do you think I should do?"
4. If Nathan's goal is taking revenge, ask other members of the class to be especially encouraging to him when he displays any pleasing behaviour.
5. If Nathan's goal is to appear inadequate, encourage any favourable behaviour and give him continual support for it.
6. Gently confront Nathan with his mistaken goal and draw him into discussion about it and his related behavior.

Further information regarding this model may be found in the following references:

* Dreikurs, R. 1968, Psychology in the classroom, (2nd edition), Harper and Row, New York.
* Dreikurs, R., & Cassel, P. 1972, Discipline without tears, Hawthorn, New York.
* Dreikurs, R., Grunwald, B., & Pepper, F. 1982, Maintaining sanity in the classroom, Harper and Row, New York.